widespread throughout the Islamic world. However there is more to it than that—indeed it comes close to the heart of the Kanuri way of looking at things. Kanuri social life is a constant search for fruitful social contacts in which one man is the superior and the other a subordinate to him. Between the sexes, the culture defines women as inferior in rank to men. Thus the place universally available to all men for the achievement of subordinates is the family and the household, and the ideal female subordinate is a young girl, one who has not yet been divorced, that is rejected her subordination to her husband, and one whom the husband can train to become properly obedient to his own personal wishes. Thus marriage to a previously unmarried girl symbolizes what every man wants, not sexually, but socially; unblemished and complete obedience from docile subordinates who receive material benefits in return for subordination. Seen in this light the marriage with young girls then becomes more understandable for it represents some of the most profoundly important values in the society.

Most Kanuri do not, however, marry girls who have never been married before. Generally they marry a *zower*—or divorced woman. This is carried out with much less ceremony than the virgin marriage. Men may see a divorced woman they like and simply send a friend who asks if she would like to marry. Or the men may begin an affair with her, give her market money once a week just as he would a wife, and then during this time decide whether or not he and this woman should proceed towards a marriage. Such liaisons are considered formally to be illegal extramarital relations, but in everyday life they are tolerated as a form of courtship. Harsh approbation is directed toward sexual relations by a man with another man's wife. Thus although a very few men claim to remain chaste in their relations with a divorced woman, most men agree that there is nothing seriously the matter with a discreet affair with such a person.

As Muslims the Kanuri also think of marriage as a relationship involving more or less *purdah*, or wifely confinement within the household. Generally, it is made quite clear before the marriage begins just how much constraint the husband expects. And for the most part such restrictions are positively related to the class and status of the husband. Thus the higher the status of the husband, the greater the probability of almost total confinement on the part of the wife. Certainly all Kanuri men would like their wives to remain inside the compound, however very few can afford to insist. To do so necessitates that there must be a well inside the compound, enough wealth so that the husband does not require the wife's work in the fields, and enough help so that he can send a male servant or client along with her on the few occasions when it becomes absolutely necessary for her to go out.

The Kanuri themselves categorize a few other forms of marriage on the basis of the relations already existing between the partners, or being set up by the marriage. They speak of cousin marriage, marriage with a religious practitioner, marriage with a wealthy or powerful person (a marriage of pleasure) as varieties of unions. They also mention the possibility of the sororate (marriage with a person called sister by one's dead wife) and the levirate (marriage by the younger brother of his dead brother's wife or wives). These latter are quite rare, and I have only recorded one case of the levirate in the last ten years, and none of the sororate. Kanuri think marriage with wife's sister, or person she calls sister while she is still

1: Cohen E-4,5 (1956-1965) 1967 MS14 Kanuri MS14

595 ly badgered her husband into marrying a young girl. He finally acceded to her wishes and chose a previously unmarried girl from a nearby village. The bridewealth and marriage expenses sent the man into great debt, but he decided that it was worth it because of the increased prestige and because he believed his wife would now stop agitating him about it and have a young friend in the house that she said she had wanted for a long time. Only three weeks afterwards the senior wife began to to demand that the husband get rid of the new wife. "The young one was not helpful," she said, and she also accused the husband of favoring his new wife over her. Finally she threatened to leave if the new wife was not disposed of and the confused husband, worried over his debts, and angered because of her change in attitude let her go and divorced her rather than accede to her new demands. In another case a man announced to his wife that he was going to marry a new wife, and she flew into a towering rage which lasted for several days. She was only mildly contained by the many gifts and had several outbursts of temper during the wedding ceremony.

593 Although men are dominant by force of tradition, discrepancies are very 597 common in everyday life. I have observed women leaving their husbands' com- 562 pound against their wishes, and many are said to be unfaithful sexually. Indeed 837 this is a favorite topic of conversation and men who are intimate friends tell jokes 521 about who is having an affair with whose wife. Some women openly flaunt their husband's authority by threatening to leave him if he refuses to allow them their 593 own way. In many cases such inconsistency between the expectations of husband 586 and wife relations and the realities of everyday married life lead to divorce.

Only rare Kanuri have not been divorced once or twice during their lifetime, and many have divorced three and often four times; eight or nine divorces is not uncommon. When explaining divorces, husbands complain of their wives cooking badly, or not on time, or not enough; they also complain of visits to relatives and friends that they felt were unnecessary, of attendance at public dances or ceremonies, of their wives being dirty, or of adultery; but always they mention and stress some activity that involves the wife's disobedience. Wives when speaking of divorces complain of their husband's intolerance, of their activities outside the household, of their stinginess, or their lack of sexual attention or skill, or of their extra-marital affairs; sometimes they complain of co-wives, or the husband's lack of appreciation of their services, especially their cooking.

Most divorces occur in the first five years of marriage, and the husband almost always formally initiates divorce proceedings. This results from the fact that the bridewealth must be returned if the wife officially initiates the divorce. Generally speaking, women can informally initiate a divorce by behaving so badly that the husband has no recourse but to send her packing, thus forfeiting his bridewealth and submitting to her wish. In one case I knew, the mother and older brother of the young girl instructed her to behave badly because they disapproved of her husband's wish to take her to the city. He took her anyway but by the end of a month found it impossible to live with her and had to send her back to her relatives in the rural area. In a few cases women initiate divorces rather more forcefully. A favorite technique in this regard is to grab the husband by the collar of his robe and scream at him, "I won't let go until you say, 'I divorce you.'" A crowd gathers and the man invariably then capitulates by saying, "I divorce you." In very

595 en, depending on a number of factors, and the husband would wish to determine his first wife's feeling on the subject before proceeding further. He might also want to examine his own feelings toward his first wife, should the possibility arise that she might refuse to accept a second wife in the household.

[837] Unlike the unmarried man, a married man is not supposed to sleep with a zogor before marrying her, since that would be adultery.

587 A man wishing to marry a zogor discusses the matter with her. If the marriage is acceptable to her, he pays the luwaliram money directly to her. Luwaliram for a zogor is much less than for a kalə yaskə. Whereas all marriages with a kalə yaskə involve the payment of sədagu, many marriages of a man with a zogor leave out the sədagu. Məri payment on marrying a zogor is no more than two or three shillings.

The husband-to-be buys kola nuts (goro) which he will distribute, while his wife-to-be begins buying and grinding millet which she will take with her to her new home. A zogor may buy six to eight shillings worth of millet which she pounds and grinds, and other foodstuffs such as wheat, rice, salt and pepper to take with her, but she brings less food to the new home than does a kalə yaskə.

The marriage ceremony itself is the same as that held when a kalə yaskə marries. Both husband and wife have a luwali who is responsible, in a sense, for the conduct of that person. The wedding takes place in the morning, and that evening women friends

593 wife (non-secluded) is also a productive asset in farming activities.
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[558] Women are fully aware in every marriage they enter to what extent their husbands are dependent upon them for the maintenance of their socio-economic status in the community, and are fully prepared at all times to manipulate their husbands, using the threat of easy divorce to break down his traditional right of domination and assert their independence within the marriage relationship. This obtains in economically low status households where the man has some difficulty in obtaining enough capital to marry. In its extreme form, given a timid husband with one wife of low status socially and economically, and an independent woman, this variable may create a completely female dominated household. Other men tend to gossip about such marriages speaking
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[937] of them as ridiculous jokes upon the poor, weak husband and scandalous, shameful behaviour on the part of the wife who usually includes open sexual freedom as a part of her dominant position. When questioned about such marriages, however, informants adopt a somewhat fatalistic attitude and comment that there is nothing the unfortunate man can do, since he needs a wife so badly and has not the necessary economic power
[183] available to him to assert his rights. Thus the cultural pattern of male dominance must be supported by real social instruments; if the male's status is overly dependent upon his wife, it becomes almost impossible for the cultural ideal of female subordination to function
593 properly. This is why higher ranking males can expect higher accord-
565 ance with traditional standards on the part of their wives. If they
183 are successful men, then all they wish from their wives is good, proper, ethical conduct, which includes submissiveness. At this level, the married status of the woman requires that she must meet her husband's demands for wifely behaviour or he will get rid of her. The operation

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183 of the above variables make such conformity to cultural patterns extremely difficult among the lower status ranks of the population, i.e., for most of the people.

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562 Closely associated with the above factors, but not directly determinative of male dominance, are the Kanuri patterns of marital fidelity and divorce. Marital chastity is considered an ideal behaviour norm for both men and women, although almost the entire weight of the prescription falls upon the married woman, which is a logical consequence [554] of the cultural ideal of male dominance. Male marital chastity is given only sham acceptance as an ethical standard by most men, except for the most highly moral, such as some religious leaders aspire to, or very respectable judges, or any other person who wishes to set himself up as a paragon of virtue and reap the benefits of status which such a reputation confers.(1)

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[595] Men may marry up to four wives in the Muslim world and because there are always zower (divorced women) in Bornu who are available sexually to men, there are a great deal of extra-marital sexual relations by men which for all intents and purposes are culturally sanctioned. In other words, social reality and every day ethical standards give to men such freedom of sexual behaviour at all times whether or not they are married. This holds true for a bachelor, as it does for a man with one, two, three or four wives. On the other hand, a woman is supposed to turn on and off her sexual freedom in and out of marriage. While married, cultural norms prescribe that she make herself

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[289] (1) The Kanuri believe that strict adherence to all moral injunctions of their culture is so difficult and so rare that any person actually practicing such a life of complete moral integrity is very "powerful." His sanctity is so great as to render his person actually dangerous; so much so, it is related, that even the clothes of such a man have power to inflict good or evil on others.

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available only to her husband and this turns to sexual freedom and experimentation when she is a divorced woman. (1)

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This results in much marital infidelity on the part of married men and women. As we have seen, this can take a sanctioned and an unsanctioned form for men, while for married women any extra-marital sexual intercourse is considered to be adultery. Thus X, a Magumeri man, well known for his extra-marital sex relations woke up a local official late one night and asked him to come and see the woman whom X had brought to his compound. This was to ensure public recognition of the fact that he was sleeping with a sower (divorced

593 woman) and not someone's wife. When asked what his wife thought of his behaviour X replied that she did not like it. He added that it was none of her business and she could leave him if she wished.

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On the other hand, Kanuri men are usually extremely suspicious of their wives. One man whose wife attended local dances used to come to these evening celebrations to make sure that no one shone a flashlight on his spouse while she was dancing. The only time that this did occur the husband reported the incident to the Village Head who in turn locked up the voyeur for the night. This same woman was observed on several occasions entering single men's sleeping huts while her husband was away on trading trips.

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Even one seemingly submissive woman, the wife of an upper class man, was observed to blossom out suddenly and visit strange

589 (1) This is not meant to imply that the woman has complete freedom, even when divorced. A woman may have one or two men supporting her and sleeping with her while she is divorced (one at a time is more common), often for only periods of a week or two at a time. Women who sleep with too many men at the same time while divorced are considered bad marriage risks and tend to be regarded as acting somewhat more like a prostitute, rather than a divorced woman, who should really be going through a series of "trial" marriages, one of which will eventually lead to the real thing.

837 households when her husband was away. Several informants remarked that it was apparent, now her husband was away, that she wished to have some tum-tum (pleasure, with a sexual implication).

593 837 Whether or not the husband is away, women must leave the compound for ceremonies, water carrying, helping other women to prepare for ceremonies, going to market, etc. Only men with wives in seclusion can restrict, and then only partially, female activities beyond the household. Within this framework, all Kanuri men know from their own experience how easily liaisons can be set up with married women, and therefore become anxious and mistrustful of wives who leave the compound too often.

837 584 The covert subversion of marital fidelity norms is also illustrated in the role of the sərsər. The sərsər is an old woman who for a fee, acts as an intermediary between a man and a married woman in promulgating a future marriage between them, which presumes the divorce of the woman from her present husband. The relationship arranged between the man and the married woman by the sərsər often [684] infers an adulterous sexual union as well. If discovered by the husband, the old woman is often taken into court with her male employer and fined heavily. However, among males who value their respectability, the old woman is usually warned at first to stay away from the compound, and the wife admonished not to have anything to do with her.

832 Another illustration that documents the social recognition of female desire for sexual freedom is the concept of tarwo which refers to walking about looking for a partner for sexual intercourse. Any man or woman walking about the town alone is suspect of tarwo. There are a few definitive signs such as man having his hat pushed for-

832 ward or a woman talking to men out in the open beyond her compound
832 walls, or immoderate behaviour at a dance. However, the conditions
831 are extremely vague and really boil down in the last analysis to a recognition of universally held motivations rather than any definite behaviour. Informants simply take it for granted that almost any one, including the anthropologist, indulges in sexual intercourse of illicit nature given the opportunity.

831 The extent of male dominance is not the only variable con-
833 trolling the incidence of adultery among females. There is also the appeal of skill, attraction, and variety in sexual experience. The Kanuri value skill in intercourse and value the experience itself as a highly pleasurable one which varies greatly from person to person. For example, informants seemed agreed on the pleasure-giving attributes of certain physiological variations in the male and female genitalia, and scaled these as being better or worse for sexual intercourse. Consequently, wide sexual experience is desirable from the point of
578 view of sensual pleasure. Besides this sensual factor, the writer re-
• 837 ceived the impression that there is a covert recognition of a general female desire to subvert male dominance. This seems to be expressed in the attempts by women to obtain sexual freedom, which the male practises, but forbids and tries to prohibit to the female. This latter point was illustrated over and over again by the attitudes of some of the younger more vocal wives, who constantly joked about adultery or made allusions to it, as a kind of game or trick that a wife plays on her husband.

837 One final point can be made about the locus of marital in-
628 fidelity. As will be shown later, groups of Kanuri towns and villages are joined together into marketing communities. Furthermore, well

837 established small wards and hamlets are the bases of networks of re-
628 lationships among the males. Men tend to find extra-marital partners in wards, hamlets, and towns other than their own, within the marketing community, since the women of their own ward or hamlet are usually the wives of their close friends and relatives.

516 It must not be supposed from the above discussion that there is any positive evaluation of divorce in Kanuri culture. On the contrary, long marriages are valued and divorce is considered by many to
[123] be a melancholy breakdown of relationship. Thus the writer was asked on numerous occasions to use his prestige in the community in order to re-unite separated couples.

581 This desire for long marriages is expressed ritually at the
585 formalization ceremony (sada'a) on the day of the marriage. After the fatiha[1] prayer has been said by the assembled males, it is customary for
[329] the person who has been married the longest to stand up first. If a European is present he fills the function, not because of his superior status, but because European marriages are well known for their durability. Informants stated that this little ritual was an expression of hope and a blessing on the present marriage for its long duration.

581 Personality factors, mutual affection and trust, preferential marriage, economic benefits, prestige accorded by the union to either party and/or their families can all contribute to the stability of marriage. Furthermore, it may be generalized that the longer the term of marriage between a man and a woman, the greater the chance that
586 their marriage will continue. Most divorces seem to take place in the first two years of marriage for non-virgin marriages, and after about four to five years in the case of first marriages (of females).

(1) The first verse of the Koran.